Linking of rivers in the country

*11. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to link all the major rivers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time-frame by which the work is likely to be completed;

(c) whether any techno-feasibility study of the project has been initiated and if so, the details thereof;

(d) the cost estimated for the completion of the project;

(e) whether Government would seek foreign assistance for the project;

(f) whether Government's attention has been drawn to several dissenting opinions expressed in the media by some top experts and specialists on the efficacy and the feasibility of the project; and

(g) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Water Resources, then known as the Ministry of Irrigation, formulated a National Perspective Plan for water resources development in 1980 which envisages inter linkages among Peninsular Rivers and Himalayan Rivers for transferring water from water surplus basins to water deficit areas for optimum utilisation of water resources. The Government of India has established the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) in 1982 as an autonomous society to carryout water blance and other studies and prepare feasibility reports. NWDA has identified 30 links under the National Perspective for preparation of the feasibility reports and has completed feasibility reports of 6 links under Peninsular Component. the tentative cost of the project at 2002 price level is Rs. 5,60,000 crores. The Central Government has constituted a Task Force on inter-linking of rivers under the Chairmanship of Shri Suresh P. Prabhu, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha on 13.12.2002. The Task Force is

working to suggest and guide the task of achieving the goal of inter-linking of rivers by the end of 2016.

(e) to (g) The Task Force will consider all opinion on efficacy and feasibility of the project and devise suitable mechanism for bringing about speedy consensus amongst the States and suggest various modalities for project funding etc.

Development of various spots in North Eastern Region

*12. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that detailed plans of development of tourism facilities in regard to Bhuban Hills in Gehar (Barak Valley), Kashipur in Silchar and Kamakhya Yatri Niwas at Guwahati are pending consideration with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for delay in sanctioning the project especially when funds therefor have already been earmarked; and

(d) by when the projects are likely to be cleared to facilitate their development as tourist resort?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (d) Position of these projects is as under:-

(i) Yatri Niwas at Bhuban Hills was sanctioned in 1997-98 for CFA of Rs. 18 lakhs. The project was dropped in consultation with the State Government.

(ii) Construction of Yatri Niwas at Khaspur was sanctioned in 1999-2000 for CFA of Rs. 18 lakhs. The State Government has reported that the project is 50% completed.

(iii) Construction of Pilgrim cottages at Kamakhya was sanctioned in 1992-93 for CFA for Rs. 27.09 lakhs. The project was dropped in conculation with the State Government.

(iv) A Pilgrim Centre at Kamakhya has been sanctioned in 1998-99 for CFA of Rs. 27.75 lakhs.